

Civil War

Shortly after the Civil War a political orator waved the bloody flag at Edrey and urged the people to vote the way they had shot. Rev. John saugh replied to him something like this: "The war is over. It is our duty to promote peace. I had a son in the Confederate army and I had a son in the Union army. If the hostilities continue, the factions will be holding their basket sinners in different hollows." This was the last effort on the part of any speaker to make a bloody flag speech in this county.

From 1926 W. Va. Blue Book

(red) The Civil War marked the division line in this county between the old and the new. The thinking men in the county were especially interested in the 1850 in introducing appliances that the soldiers had observed on their campaigns. This was the line of demarcation between the sickle and the grain cradle, the flintlock rifle and the repeating rifle, the introduction of the steam engine and the portable sawmill to take the place of the water turned mill, kerosene lamps for candle light. E. A. Friel of near Clover Lick owned the first kerosene lamp ever in the county in 1855.

Not more than anything else that spurred the business men of Pocahontas County was the success of James E. A. Gibbs, of Marlinton, who after the Civil War found he was rich because of the success of a chain stitch sewing machine he had invented just before the war.

The older citizens of today have seen the adoption of such things as the steam engine, sewing machine (1852), turbine wheel, telephone (1898), printing ships (1862) hand mills, and many more. On the other hand, during this period, we lost a great many skilled workmen such as saddlemakers, farriers, shoemakers, weavers, spinners, tailors, harnessmakers, saddlers, stonecutters and the like. This was especially true after the covered wagon began to bring in freight from Millboro, Slaters, Huttonsville, and Roseworts and with the coming of the railroads in 1861 they became fewer and fewer.

The industrial developments were gradual. This county developed along with the general developments of Virginia through the building of turpines in the 1880-90.

of the early settlers were the chief industries.

Agriculture was the chief pursuit of the early settlers of Pocahontas county. Because travel was difficult and transportation facilities were meager, the settlers were compelled to be practically self sustaining. Gardening, together with the growing of small patches of buckwheat, corn, beans, and potatoes, largely constituted the early farming enterprises. Later cattle, sheep, and hogs were introduced principally for wool and meat to supplement the supply of wild game and fish that was an important source of food and clothing. Trapping furnished furs and skins that could be traded for the few supplies not produced at home. The bottom lands were generally devoted to grain and hay, and the adjacent slopes were cleared and used for pastures. The land has always been farmed, for the most part, in small tracts by the owners. Few slaves were owned and the freeing of them did not affect agriculture.

Between 1880 and 1890 the production of all grains and crops increased materially. The total acreage in all grains has remained fairly constant since 1890, but acreage in certain crops has fluctuated considerably. Corn has been in the lead at all times followed by either wheat or oats. Hay increased from 10,819 acres in 1879 to 15,138 acres in 1889 and has increased very little since, but the acre yield has been more than doubled. Since 1900 the total number of hogs and cattle has dropped off slightly, but the number of sheep raised and the production of wool, dairy products, poultry and eggs have increased considerably. The acreage occupied by potatoes and garden crops most of which are grown for home use, fluctuates from year to year.

Between 1890 and 1910 the number of farms steadily increased from 632 to 1,198, the latter figure being only 3 below that given by the 1920 census report. As the size of the farms has decreased slightly in the last 50 years, the total amount of land in farms has remained fairly constant.

Poor transportation facilities, long distance from markets, and the need of cash income forced the farmers of this section in early days to turn to the production of beef. Even now with railroad shipping available, it remains the largest source of income. Formerly all cattle, when ready for market, were driven overland. To outside markets, principally Pittsburgh, Baltimore and Christburg. Any were sold as feeders

usually they came to the place, on the rocky side

... were distributed from there.  
... were sold grass fattened.

... were governed largely by the steepness of the land  
the size of the farm. Soon after transportation facilities became available the  
... land owners brought in mowing machines, reapers, buggy rakes and wagons, but on  
smaller patch farms and on steep or stony lands, much of the work was still done  
... and continues so even today.

- \* (red) From---Pocahontas Times --- 1929  
by --- Andrew Price
- \* (green) From---Report on Pope County  
by --- Dr. B. H. Williams of the U. S. Depart. of Agri.